

Anarchism – a Living Tradition

LIKE THE HISTORICAL ANARCHIST MOVEMENT THE NEW LEFT TODAY is an international phenomenon, and it is recognized as such both by the revolutionaries themselves and by the authorities, just as the revolutionary movement was a century ago. In June 1871, a few weeks after the suppression of the Paris commune, Jules Favre, the Foreign Minister in the provisional government, said 'Europe is faced by a work of destruction which is directed against all nations and directed against the principles upon which civilization rests.' And on 14 November 1968, a few months after the attempts at revolution in Paris in the spring, M. Raymond Marcellin, Minister of the Interior in the French government, said 'a study of the movement launched in the German Federal Republic in November 1967, in Britain from 1968, and the attempts observed in Holland at the same time disclosed the disturbing simultaneousness, a complete identity of methods of action and of intervention between communist and activist groups. We observe in the convergence of the phenomenon between Europe and the United States in the last few years the action of determined and militant minorities cultivating close contacts with each other across frontiers and living in a state of permanent conspiracy against society.'¹ This conception of an international permanent conspiracy against society is an essential element in the anarchist tradition as it was formulated in the 19th century, and it is this idea of permanent and total conspiracy against society that makes anarchism so attractive to a certain type of temperament in the 20th.

The rich and often contradictory variety of ideas in the anarchism of the past continue to be found in the revolutionary movements of the present. Many contemporary revolutionists deny that there is any direct influence; and Daniel Cohn Bendit has emphasized the extremely eclectic nature of such intellectual forebears as there are: 'Some people have tried to force Marcuse on us as a mentor; that is

¹ *The Times*, 15 November 1968.

a joke. None of us have read Marcuse. Some have read Marx, of course, perhaps Bakunin, and of the moderns Althusser, Mao, Guevara, Lefebvre. Nearly all the militants . . . have read Sartre.² Many of the guardians of traditional anarchist doctrines, as emerges from David Stafford's article and others, have been as anxious to dissociate themselves from contemporary revolutionary developments as the revolutionaries have been to deny links with them, and have shown themselves, as Antonio Gramsci remarked some fifty years ago, 'persuaded that they are the repositories of revealed revolutionary truth'.³ Yet what emerges strongly from the studies we have collected in this volume is to what a large extent traditional anarchist ideas and attitudes, whether as the result of direct influences or of contemporary circumstances, can be found in the ideas and actions of the extreme left all over the world.

One can look at the anarchist tradition in three different ways – as a doctrine; that is to say, a set of ideas about social organization and about social relations; as a movement, that is to say as a technique of revolution; and as a certain type of temperament, based on a desire to push things to extremes, to carry ideas through to a logical practical end, to overthrow society from top to bottom, a temperament which in many cases enjoys or believes in the act of revolution for its own sake, without worrying about the consequence of the revolution later.

THE AMBIVALENT DOCTRINE

One of the attractions of anarchism has been the extent to which it has offered something for everybody. It has offered, that is to say, the hope of a rational peaceful society of gentle people co-operating with one another, while also offering the excitement of a total revolution with its concomitant violence and terror. The rationalist streak in anarchism is balanced all through the history of anarchism by an anti-rationalist one. The classical anarchist writings contain many rationalist theoretical accounts of what society would be like after the revolution. The most obvious case of rationalism, sometimes carried to an absurd extent, is in the writings of William Godwin.

² Hervé Bourges (ed.), *The Student Revolt – The Activists Speak*, English Edition, London, 1968, p. 78.

³ Antonio Gramsci, 'Discorso agli Anarchici', *L'Ordine Nuovo 1919–1920*, (Opere di Antonio Gramsci, Vol. 9), Turin, 1954, p. 396.

This is a world in which all passions are subordinated to reason, and in which all problems are solved in a rational way. Men are naturally reasonable; it is only institutions which make them behave unreasonably, and with the abolition of the state, the innate human potentialities for justice and rational co-operation will assert themselves. Throughout the 19th century, anarchist thinkers vacillated between the two extremes of violence and reason. Proudhon made a real attempt to face the problem, though, as always in his writing, his inability to carry through a long piece of systematic thinking makes his solutions rather fragmentary and unsatisfactory. But he had a sense of the dark forces in man and of the necessity of a constant struggle if reason and justice are to prevail against them. For all the violence of his own feelings and prejudices – or perhaps because of them – he still kept a belief in rational argument and a reluctance to advocate violence for its own sake.

Kropotkin, writing in the full flood of post-Darwinian thinking about man and society, was very concerned to produce a rational scientific justification of co-operation, as against the view of life as a violent struggle for survival, in which the weak are exterminated by the strong. His interesting and somehow very touching book, *Mutual Aid*, sets out to refute this version of the Darwinian theory and to show that, on the contrary, evolution was the result of co-operation and mutual aid, and that those species and those primitive societies which have survived are those which have the best power of co-operation and are able to work together.

Yet, for many anarchists, the belief in education, co-operation and peaceful persuasion goes hand in hand with a belief in direct action and even with active involvement in schemes for assassination. The Spanish anarchist educationalist Francisco Ferrer, for example, is a man who is generally thought of as a pioneer of modern education, of a new type of school in which pupils would not be coerced or subjected to discipline but would run their own lessons for themselves, *organize their own work* and so on. Ferrer was arrested after the disturbances in Barcelona in 1909; and it was always thought that his subsequent execution was a monstrous miscarriage of justice and that he was sincere in his repudiation of violence. However, Joaquín Romero Maura has shown in a recent article that Ferrer had been at the centre of a plan to assassinate the king of Spain.⁴ He provided the money with which the plan was made possible and

⁴ J. Romero Maura, 'Terrorism in Barcelona 1904-1909', *Past and Present*, No. 41, December 1968.

he was one of the coolest and most calculating of people in his belief in the necessity of violence to achieve an immediate and, it was hoped, very sensational political end. He is an example of the curious co-existence in the anarchist tradition of enlightened reason and a belief in violence.

For many contemporary revolutionaries, the violent element in anarchist theory and practice is more important than the rational, utopian one. As Michael Lerner disturbingly shows, the acceptance of violence is characteristic of the 'counter-culture'; and there is no aspect of the revolutionary movement among the young which separates it more clearly from that of the liberal radicals of the previous generation. In philosophical terms, they are obsessed by what Herbert Marcuse calls 'the liberating function of negation'; and this is very easily transferred from the philosophical to the practical plane. This is perhaps why it is Bakunin among the classical anarchist thinkers who has most strongly captured the imagination of the contemporary revolutionaries. This is not however just because his love of practical revolution led him to participate personally in revolutionary outbreaks wherever he could find them, or even because his remarks about violence sometimes seemed to justify it as an emotional experience as well as a method of revolution. Even though recent research by Michael Confino suggests that the famous Revolutionary Catechism of 1869, which Bakunin was long believed to have written in collaboration with Nechayev, was the work of Nechayev alone, and that Bakunin dissociated himself from Nechayev's extreme praise of violence and cruelty, Bakunin's belief in direct action and in the effectiveness of the example of a revolutionary few to spark off the spontaneous revolt of the masses has much in common with the assumptions of the contemporary apostles of direct action. Bakunin summed up his programme to Nechayev as follows: 'Total destruction of the world of the legal state and of all the bourgeois so-called civilization, by means of a popular revolution, directed not by an official dictatorship, but by a collective, imperceptible and anonymous dictatorship of the partisans of the complete liberation of the people from all oppression, firmly united in a secret society and acting everywhere and always with the same goal and according to the same programme.'⁵ It is a programme to which many of the groups discussed

⁵ Bakunin to Nechayev, 2 January 1870, printed in Michael Confino, 'Bakunin et Necaev', *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, Vol. VII, No. 4, October-December 1966, pp. 629-30.

in this volume would be prepared to subscribe. Many of them, moreover, would go all the way with Nechayev, and, indeed, with Bakunin himself, who saw in the brigand in Russia the true and only revolutionary, just as Dave Harris finds 'no more honourable position in modern America than that of criminal'.⁶ But there is another aspect which draws many contemporary revolutionaries to Bakunin; the fact that he insisted again and again that the form of the revolutionary movement itself must foreshadow the form of society after the revolution. In his arguments with Marx he was constantly asserting that if you have an authoritarian revolutionary movement of the kind Marx wanted, then you would have an authoritarian society after the revolution. The circular which Bakunin's supporters produced in the middle of his quarrel with Marx in 1871 said 'How can you expect an egalitarian and a free society to emerge from an authoritarian organization?'⁷ And this is one of the points which is reiterated again by contemporary libertarian revolutionaries: 'L'organisation révolutionnaire a du apprendre qu'elle ne peut plus combattre l'aliénation sous des formes aliénées.'⁸ In his emphasis on the necessity of having the right kind of organization in order to produce the right kind of society after the revolution, Bakunin insisted that the movement must not rely on permanent leaders. At certain moments a militant elite, prepared to go the whole way in making the revolution, would be needed, but they must never be regarded as occupying permanent positions, and therefore developing into autocrats or people consumed with the desire for power. This belief that there should be no permanent and identifiable leadership has its practical aspect, of course, in that it makes identification and thus arrest and punishment harder, but it also represents a genuine ideal of co-operation which was of particular importance in the organization, or lack of it, in the Spanish anarchist movement.

THE FUTURE WHICH HAS BEGUN

Much of the utopian element in the contemporary revolutionary movement is to be found in its concept of what the movement itself

⁶ See p. 443 above.

⁷ The *Sonvillier Circular*, November 1871, quoted in J. Joll, *The Anarchists*, Paperback ed., London 1969, p. 105.

⁸ *Adresse à tous les Travailleurs*, 30 May 1968, published by 'Comité Enragés - Internationale Situationniste'.

is. The feeling of liberation and excitement which participation in the revolts in Paris produced is documented in every report one reads and in every conversation with participants. For these young people, the revolutionary movement is not only the pattern of future society which Bakunin believed that it should be: it *is* future society. Their Utopia is realized here and now in the process of revolution itself. A typical example of this way of thinking is a remark of a Columbia student, printed in the Cox Commission's report: 'Always meetings and more meetings lasting long into the night. Participatory democracy. There was a real community spirit; everything belonged to everybody; the building was "liberated". Girls . . . were not expected to do the kitchen work alone for this was a "liberated" area, and boys had to help. Couples slept together in public view, nobody cared, we were "liberated": here was a single commune in which adult hypocrisies did not apply any longer, where people shared and shared alike, where democracy decided everything, where people were free of adult values and codes.'⁹ As Richard Gombin points out, this aspect of the revolution has become of extreme importance in contemporary movements of revolt. In a sense very different from that intended by Eduard Bernstein in a famous phrase 'The goal is nothing, the movement is all'.

In addition to Bakunin's insistence on the relation between the revolutionary movement and post-revolutionary society, many contemporary revolutionaries share his belief that the revolution will be made possible by the action of a militant elite of people totally dedicated to the revolutionary cause. In adopting this attitude the revolutionary becomes an outlaw in practice as well as an outlaw emotionally. He identifies himself with the bandits, the robbers and the people who attacked bourgeois society directly by stealing or destroying other people's property.

For Bakunin, as perhaps for Che Guevara, the people who were going to make a revolution were the people with nothing to lose – the hopeless and helpless, the totally dispirited – the proletariat of the cities, as in Barcelona from 1902, with no hope of redress through orthodox trade union activities, the landless rural workers constantly threatened with famine and at the mercy of unscrupulous and often absent and remote landlords.

In the 1870s when Bakunin's ideas were receiving considerable

⁹ *Crisis at Columbia*: Report of the Fact-Finding Commission, New York, 1969, p. 138.

currency, the anarchists linked them with another doctrine that has been revived by the contemporary revolutionaries, the doctrine of propaganda by the deed. In a bourgeois society the only way to get anybody to make a revolution is by showing them the way, by taking some extreme action which would show that revolution was possible, and which would encourage other people to follow the example. A famous example is that of Errico Malatesta in 1876, when he thought that he could start the revolution in Italy by getting the peasants in a very small area to revolt. He and two or three friends went into the mountains of the south of Italy, arrived at a small town or large village, proclaimed the revolution to the bewildered peasants, then led them to the Town Hall to destroy the files – a great ritual gesture of anarchists – the records of contracts, the records of property ownership, of births and marriages. They did this successfully in one village and then went on to the next, where the peasants were less enthusiastic. Then it started to rain, and the little band was quickly rounded up by the police. This belief that you can set off the revolution in a small area, that this would then have the effect of starting a conflagration and would consume the whole of society is something that has always a great appeal, because it appears to justify revolution in a situation where all the forces appear to be massed against you and where the odds appear not to be on your side at all. In discussing the events in Paris in 1968 several writers maintained that the students' role was that of a detonator. Once one section of society, even on a comparatively small scale, is in open revolt against the whole structure of the existing order, then the other oppressed classes, and the other members of similar groups in other parts of the country would follow the example.

The other aspect of propaganda by the deed was the most sensational form of anarchist activity, namely direct individual terrorism. It is the chapter of anarchism which has become most notorious, and also the anarchist technique which has been most widely imitated. Between 1880 and 1914 a whole series of anarchist outrages were directed against the symbols of power and corruption in existing society. Kings, prime ministers and members of imperial families were assassinated; bottles of vitriol were thrown into the Stock Exchange, a bomb dropped over the balcony of the chamber of deputies in Paris. Bombs were thrown into fashionable theatres and restaurants as a protest against bourgeois society. And in one famous case in Paris in the 1890s, a man threw a bomb into a very

ordinary cafe where workers as well as members of the bourgeoisie were drinking, on the assumption that nobody is exempt from guilt and that in attacking society anywhere you are bound to hit some guilty men. This is certainly an argument used by some radicals today. Any section of existing society contains guilty people who are responsible for the whole, and therefore you may as well start your revolution right away and throw your bombs at whatever is the most immediate target that presents itself. The nuisance value of these tactics or of similar ones has been fully utilized by subsequent extremist movements both of the right and the left – the Young Bosnians who assassinated the Archduke Francis Ferdinand in 1914, the suffragettes in Britain before the first war, Arab terrorists, Jewish terrorists, French right-wing groups at the time of the Algerian war, were all inspired by the anarchist example.

The advantage of propaganda by the deed is that it can create a great stir. There is no doubt, for instance, that in the 1890s these terrorist activities worried the authorities and the police of Europe very much indeed. The police archives of this period in France and Spain give a very exaggerated picture of the strength of the anarchist movement, and give the false impression that there really was an enormously well-organized widespread mass movement which was almost certain to triumph unless massive measures were taken to repress it. In fact however, beyond winning notoriety, the anarchists did not achieve very much by these isolated actions, and consequently had to evolve another method of action that would be more effective than these terrorist gestures. It was this which led to the anarchist link with the syndicalist movement.

REVOLUTIONARY MYTHS

Proudhon had believed that the only effective way to get rid of the state and the whole range of abuses which the state machinery carried with it was through direct control of the means of production by the producers themselves, and through the establishment of a direct relationship between producers and consumers. This meant abolishing the whole structure of credit, finance and middlemen so as to get back to a very simple and very primitive economic state where the producers of one commodity would exchange their products directly with producers of another commodity, and where the people who had some services to offer would offer their skill in exchange for

something produced by someone else. Above all this must be done in as direct a way as possible. This gave rise to a piece of anarchist romanticism which survives down to our own day: the belief that if only money were abolished then society would be purer and better and more efficient. And it is very revealing in this connection to see how Castro, at certain moments in his more utopian speculations, talks about the day when money will be completely abolished and when everybody will get what they need without the necessity of any medium of exchange.

Proudhon believed that workers must control their own means of production; the workers must control the workshop, the peasants must control the fields and all these producing communities must be decentralized politically as far as possible, independently of any central authority. In India these ideas have combined with traditional religious beliefs to produce a significant social movement. In Europe, Proudhon's doctrines have never been lost in the French working-class movement; and by the end of the 19th century the idea of workers' control in the factories was linked with the idea that it was only by direct control over production that a revolution could be made. Political changes of government meant nothing, it was alleged: politicians had all already sold out to the system. The way to make a revolution was to ignore elections and parliament and to concentrate on gaining workers' control in the factories and building up decentralized economic units on this basis. As for the method to be adopted, the correct procedure, it was argued by the militant syndicalists, was to use strikes, not as was advocated by the orthodox trade unionists and by the socialists to obtain piecemeal improvements, more wages, shorter hours and so on, but rather to immobilize the means of production preparatory to taking them over at the great moment of the general strike, when everything would come to a standstill and the workers be left in control.

The idea of workers' control has, of course, never wholly vanished from the international working-class movement. And, as is only to be expected, it figures largely in the ideals of the New Left. 'I am not a theoretician', Alain Geismar has said. 'For me, socialism can be defined negatively with respect to existing structures by a rejection of all bureaucracy, of all centralized direction, by granting power to the producers at their point of production.'¹⁰ Indeed, one of the

¹⁰ H. Bourges (ed.), *The Student Revolt: The Activists Speak*, p. 60.

great apparent successes of the French revolt of 1968 was not only the links – tenuous and precarious as it turned out, but more extensive than anywhere else – established between the students and the workers, but also the launching of the idea of ‘participation’, whatever that may mean, and of seeing it accepted in theory even by General de Gaulle himself. The older supporters of anarchist or near-anarchist ideas, such as Daniel Guérin, point eagerly to the experiments in workers’ control in revolutionary states, at what is promised in Cuba and at what is being achieved in Yugoslavia. (It is, indeed, in the latter country that the most interesting experiments in this direction are being made, and we need to know a great deal more, especially in connection with our own discussions in Britain and Trades Union legislation, of how the Yugoslav Economic Reform of 1965 is working out in practice.) One can suggest, however, that even where a system of workers’ control has been successful in overcoming a feeling of ‘alienation’ by giving workers a sense of participation in the running of their enterprise, there are still a number of unsolved problems: there are still strikes; and these have been resolved by the intervention of either the state or the party authorities and not within the factories themselves. There are still problems about determining the overall priorities in economic planning involving a large number of different industries, the need for investment from outside the concern and many others. Yugoslav communists have always accepted the orthodox doctrine of the withering away of the state – though the unfortunate Mr Djilas was sent to prison for asserting prematurely that something should now be done to put it into effect – but there is something paradoxical in the spectacle of a one-party revolutionary communist state that is trying to put into practice one of the basic anarchist doctrines.

In trying to assess which elements in the anarchist tradition are to be found in contemporary revolutionary movements, one is constantly struck by the fact that the thinker whose ideas come closest to those of the New Left is not strictly anarchist. This is, of course, Georges Sorel. His ideas have been so widely discussed and commented on in the last few years that there is no need to say much about them. However, his belief in violence, not only as a means, but as a valuable experience in itself, the role he allots to the professional revolutionary militants and the importance he attaches to direct workers’ control are all commonplaces of the revolutionary movement today. But there are two other important aspects of Sorel’s thought which go some way, alas, to justifying Daniel

Halévy's claim, made already nearly thirty years ago: 'Those who listened to him . . . owe it to him that they have not been surprised at the changes in the world.'¹¹ The first of these points is Sorel's anti-intellectualism. He insisted, as the leaders of the First International had done, that the revolution must be the work of the workers themselves, but combined this with a strong anti-intellectual streak. Sorel himself was characteristic of that type of revolutionary – and they are common today – who comes from the middle of the classes which they are actively concerned to attack. He was a member of the French bourgeoisie; he was a skilled professional engineer; and he was an intellectual, who used to take the tram into Paris from his suburban home to listen to Bergson's lectures once a week. His attack on intellectuals reads very similarly to the attacks on liberal hypocrisy and double-talk in such classics of contemporary revolutionary literature as the work of the late Franz Fanon, who indeed has recently been described by Professor E. Shils, in an article in *Encounter*, as 'only an eloquent Sorel'. Sorel maintained that it was the intellectuals who were corrupting society by suggesting that there were easy answers to social problems, whereas the truth was, Sorel believed, that political programmes rarely had any relevance to the problems which they attempted to solve. It was, on the contrary, just because there were no easy solutions and no piecemeal answers that revolution must be an act of all or nothing. And it was for the same reason that revolution must be the result of a passionate act of faith, of belief in the 'myth' which was to enable society to be changed at one blow. For Sorel, the most important myth was that of the general strike; and there are moments when he writes as if you might never actually need to have one, that bourgeois society would be so demoralized by the belief that the general strike was coming one day that it would fall to pieces of its own accord. The importance of Sorel's doctrine of the 'myth' is that it provides one explanation why people attempt revolutionary outbreaks at moments when they seem to have little chance of success. If you believe in something hard enough, if you create the impression that there is going to be a revolution, if you spread the conviction that society is rotten to the core and is about to collapse, then you are already taking a big step forward towards the collapse of society. Belief in the possibility of the impossible can sometimes be as important as action itself.

¹¹ D. Halévy, *Péguy et les Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, Paris, 1941, p. 108.

PERENNIAL ATTITUDES

So far I have been stressing what the New Left of today has in common with anarchist doctrines of the past; but there are obvious and important differences, if not in doctrine, at least in circumstance. Bakunin always maintained that revolutions are made by those with nothing to lose; and the success of anarchism in parts of Spain and Italy where it was a creed especially attractive to impoverished landless agricultural labourers may be said to bear this out. Anarchist ideas have also attracted support where there is a tradition of small enterprises and skilled workers – in parts of France or among the watch-makers of the Swiss Jura – or where a strong tradition of federalism and regional independence is accompanied by economic depression and by governmental repression, as in Catalonia.

Today, although some of the French revolutionaries of 1968 claimed that 'this is the first time that there has been a revolutionary struggle on this scale in an economically advanced country', much contemporary revolutionary activity exists in a kind of vacuum. In Europe, the revolution has so far been the work of students, and largely middle class ones at that; and even when their aims have been political – as in the case of some of the French groups or the *Ausserparlamentarische Opposition* in Germany – they have attracted little support from any other class than the *Freischwebende Intelligenz*. Their ideas of decentralization, workers' control, the abolition of money, all presuppose a society that is uncomplicated in structure, and comparatively easy to transform into the kind of basic federated communal system which the anarchists envisage. They are clearly not entirely appropriate to a highly centralized industrial society, even if they perhaps suggest ways of humanizing it and making it more tolerable.

The idea of workers' control and decentralization has played a big part in the history and in the mythology of the Left. The totally ineffective workers and soldiers councils in the German revolution in 1918–19 have become objects of a cult for the German student revolutionists today, who ignore the reasons for their failure and do not see that the Soviets were successful in 1917 in Russia because the framework of the state had collapsed, which it had not done in Germany in 1918, still less in Western Europe today. In France, and now of course in the student movement everywhere, the reaction against centralized bureaucracy has suggested

its own revolutionary techniques, which are linked to the myth of workers' councils. It is because the trade unions themselves are suspected of being heartless bureaucratic organizations that workers have acted on their own, by spontaneous occupation of factories — as in the famous weeks in France in the summer of 1936 where the technique of the sit-in was first practised on a large scale in department stores and offices as well as in workshops, to the dismay, as in 1968, of the Communist Party as well as of the employers.

Are we to conclude, then, that the anarchist elements in contemporary revolutionary thought are as is often maintained, a spontaneous and inevitable reaction against bureaucracy, against the boredom of mass industrial production, against the hypocrisy and vulgarity of the mass media? Are the supporters of the New Left what Professor Scheuch has called 'The Anabaptists of the Affluent Society'?¹² This is certainly one reason for the attraction of anarchist ideas in the contemporary western world. But the reason why anarchism is still a living tradition lies not just in how far its doctrines are applicable or inapplicable to advanced industrial society, but rather in the fact that they offer something for everybody. If you are a peaceful person who wants a vegetarian life in a garden city, then anarchism has something to offer. If you are a man of violent temperament who thinks that only by direct action and by the purgative quality of violence itself will you be able to cleanse yourself and society of guilt and make an effective revolution, then there is a long line of anarchist thought and action to support your view.

What these strands of the anarchist tradition have in common is their belief in the possibility of total and instant transformation of society, their faith that anything can be achieved, even if it seems impossible. (This leads often to a denial of the value of history and historical evidence; it is interesting to see how often contemporary anarchists suggest that the Catalan anarchist movement has been a wholly successful one.) Every situation is a revolutionary situation, whatever the odds against success. There is however another sense in which the anarchist tradition comes close to that of a religious movement. This is in the sense in which the militant, whether violent or pacific, is thought of as a man with a mission. Gandhi, for example, describing the way in which he foresaw the transformation of Indian society, wrote 'For the creation of the ideal village,

¹² Erwin K. Scheuch (ed.), *Die Wiedertäufer der Wohlstandsgesellschaft*, Cologne, 1968.

no speech-making is necessary, nor is there any need of legislative councils or legislation. One thing only is essential, and that is a small number of selfless working-men and women. They can by their example and spirit of service get the requisite improvements made.'

I have been suggesting that, if there is a living anarchist tradition, it should be sought in psychological and temperamental attitudes to society as much as in a sociological analysis of the societies in which anarchism has flourished. This also accounts for the somewhat incoherent nature of anarchist philosophy and indeed the difficulty anyone who talks about anarchism has in defining just what it is he is talking about. Even Proudhon, perhaps the greatest anarchist thinker, is contradictory and unsystematic in his thinking, and Marx's criticism of the poverty of his philosophy has considerable justification. Nor has the present revival of interest in anarchism produced much in the way of serious political theory: the ideas, such as they are, of the New Left largely come from non-anarchist sources. It is significant that the most striking of the contemporary examples of anarchism in action described in this volume have come from rich and prosperous societies with a high degree of industrialization. Moreover, Joaquín Romero Maura has made the point that anarchism in Spain was more effective under a regime in which the forms at least of constitutional liberalism existed, than under the present authoritarian system. Anarchism owes more to conventional liberalism than some of its exponents are willing to admit. Contemporary anarchism is a product of the permissive society; and it is just because liberalism has lost its effective political content that the critics of existing social arrangements have felt obliged, in order to give their personal protests a social meaning, to use the opportunities provided by the permissive society in order to attack its fundamental values and the presuppositions on which its structure is based. Whether, in the long historical run, this is going to be a significant social movement, it is too soon to say. But, certainly in the United States, and perhaps in France, it has already provided a severe shock to existing society. At least, as the essays in this volume clearly show, the international experience of the past few years has proved that, in one form or another, anarchism is, in the second half of the 20th century, still very much a living tradition.